



P L A N

O F

A PAGODA AND FLOWER GARDEN

I N

THE COMMON,

SUBMITTED TO THE

C I T I Z E N S O F B O S T O N,

ALSO, A REMARKABLE CASE OF

S L E E P L E S S N E S S.

B O S T O N:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

AND SOLD BY BOOKSELLERS.

1843.



## TO THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Informed by His Honor the Mayor, that you “*have reserved in your own hands the power to place a building on the Common,*” I have caused plates to be engraved for your better understanding my Plan of a Pagoda, &c.

Permit me, therefore, to submit the same to your inspection ; and, if approved by the majority, it will be easy to decide, at next annual election, whether or no the work shall proceed.

My offers to execute were made to arrest attention, as matter of business. If required, I would adhere ; being certain that all could be done to profit ; but, I wish no job of the kind ; and many are better qualified, for execution than I am.

Before the question is settled, I shall be gone hence : but shall ever bear in mind pleasing recollections of Boston, where I have had more enjoyment than I could have had any where this side the Atlantic, from general intelligence, moral discipline, and steady habits ; — much more than I have experienced in any other city — London, Edinburgh, or New York : — enjoyment, which have soothed me under cruel circumstances ; and, which, will be continued, should I succeed in adding to your’s.

Meantime, accept the best wishes of

Your obedient and very humble servant,

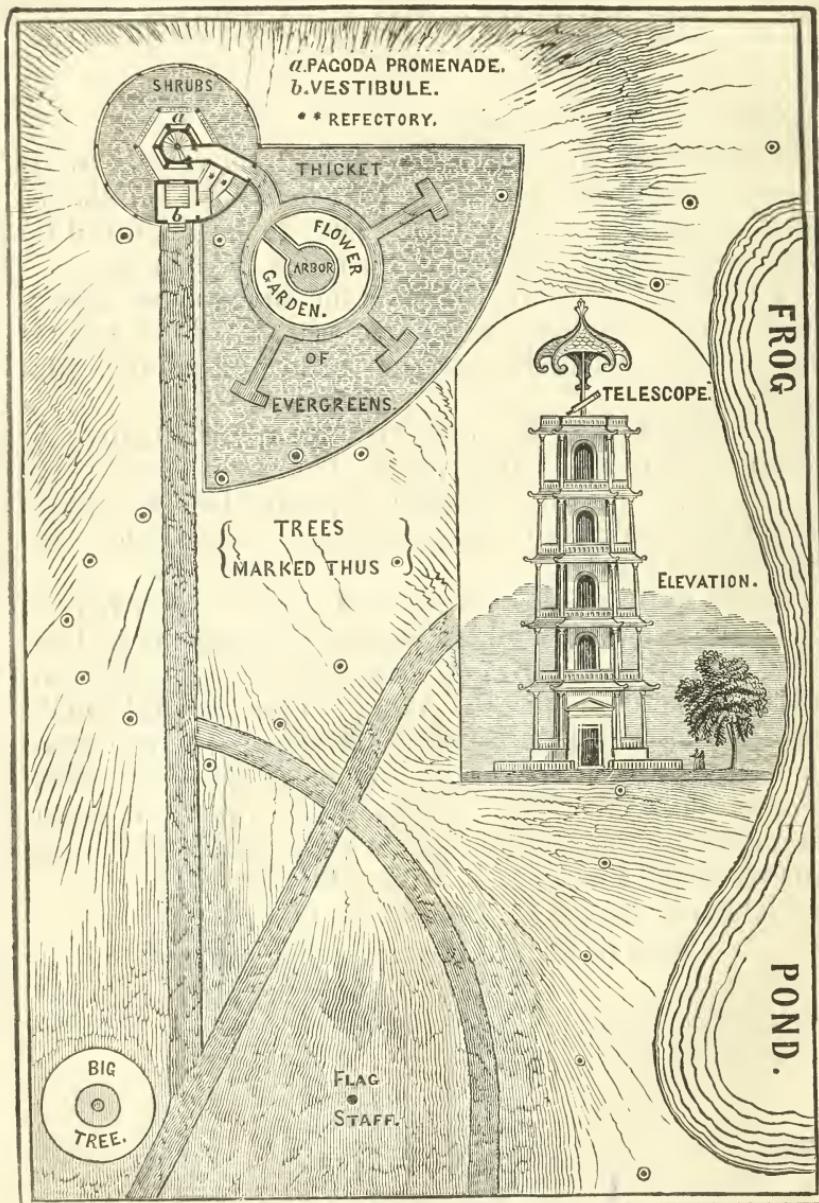
ROBERT F. GOURLAY.

*Marlboro' Hotel,*  
*September 15, 1843.* }

# PLAN AND ELEVATION

OF

A PAGODA, with a FLOWER GARDEN, in Boston Common.

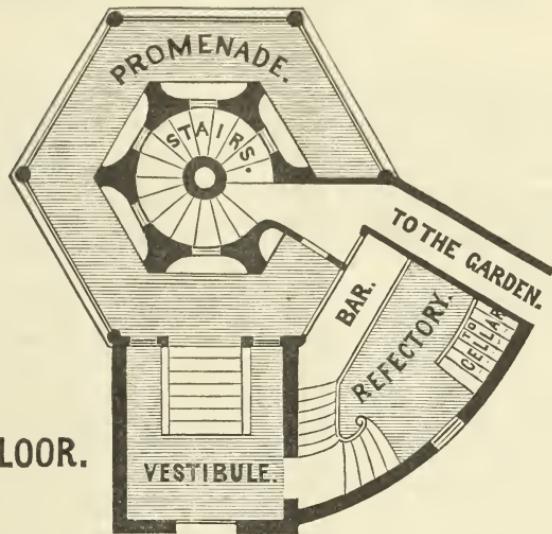


# RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

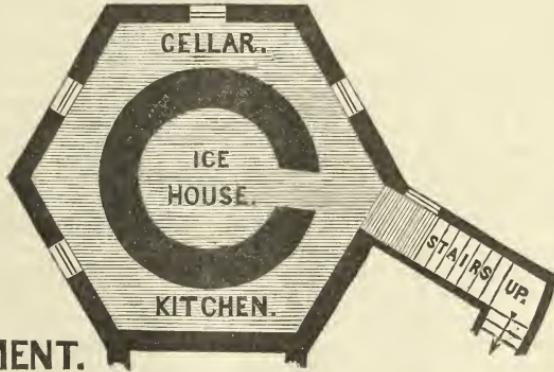
TO

The good taste and sound judgment of the Citizens at large.

FIRST FLOOR.



BASEMENT.



5 10 Scale of Feet 20 30

PLANS.

## THE SCIENCE OF CITY BUILDING.

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LANDED at Quebec, May, 1817, I was immediately struck with the miserable planning of that city ;—some of its principal streets being from fifteen to twenty feet wide, only. At Montreal it was better. At Kingston, well, in this respect ;—the streets being seventy feet wide ;—sufficient, where the length is not great, or the stream of commerce excessive.

At Buffalo, the main street appeared too wide ; for there is a limit beyond which inconveniences are experienced ; and this was more apparent at Canandaigua.

At Detroit, December of the same year, General Macombe laid before me a plan for the extension of that city ; and, then, it first dawned on my mind, that City-building might, and should be reduced to a science, of incalculable value in America, where thousands of cities are yet to be founded. This idea has been cherished ever since ; and, in London, Edinburgh, New York, Cleveland, and Kingston, I have employed spare time in drawing plans, with a view, ultimately, of illustrating the science. This study gave rise to the present proposal of building a Pagoda on the Common ; and other improvements are contemplated for Boston, which may yet be spoken of.

At Edinburgh, in 1829, I published Plans for the improvement of that city, with a proposal to institute a society for promoting the "science of City-building ;" and in 1831, sent one of my Plans to General Macombe, at Washington, to prepare the way for coöperation, on this continent ; but, as yet, all my projects have been marred with untoward circumstances, and endless persecution.

I now flatter myself that, in this "*CRADLE OF LIBERTY*," my suggestion may be acted on, and Boston become, also, the "*THE CRADLE* of the arts and sciences. A society for advancing the science of city building may be instituted by any dozen individuals of taste and liberality. They could easily set a-going a Periodical which would pay, and secure coöperation from all parts of the Union. In all parts, people are at work planning buildings of every description,—villages and cities ; and, a central point, either to draw intelligence from, or to send intelligence to,—hints, essays, plans, &c., would be highly beneficial.

I could furnish materials for several numbers of the Periodical to begin with ; and, once begun, materials would overflow. The society, indeed, would only have to meet an hour or two, once a week, or once a month, to select, and cause to be digested, the voluminous matter.

At present I can only throw out these hints ; but these may suffice.

R. F. G.

In the year 1824, I was again confined by British tyranny, in London, three years and eight months ;—the purpose being to make me appear, to the world, insane ; and, thus, have my influence with the people destroyed. I weathered this persecution by living on vegetable food ; and, being free from all excitement, the time passed away happily. During this confinement, I had need of very little sleep ; and, the greater part of my time in bed, never more than six hours, was given to reveries, chiefly as to schemes for bettering the condition of the laboring poor, plans for laying out land in the wilderness, and studies for city building, which I contemplated, and still do, to reduce to a science.

It was during this period, I think, that a habit of living without sleep began to form. From March, 1828, till November, 1833, I was tortured, in Scotland, with unsettled affairs ; but, generally in the best health ; and could walk, from morn to night, without fatigue, while four or five hours of sleep was quite enough for rest and enjoyment.

November 5, 1833, I left Edinburgh at six o'clock, P. M., in a canal-boat, on my way for America — choosing such conveyance that I might be along with my trunks, containing valuable books and papers. The boat was an iron one, and, jarring every little while against some other boat, bridge, or lock, subjected me, reclining in a vile hold, to unspeakable discomfort. Sleep was out of the question ; and I had none, all the way to Glasgow, which we reached about 10 o'clock next morning. Taking time, on shore, only for breakfast, I forthwith had my trunks conveyed to a steamer in the Clyde, and immediately sailed for Greenock. There, getting on board the steamship Vulcan, we were under weigh, for Liverpool, in half an hour. We ran to sea in the teeth of a hurricane ; sheltered, during night, in Lamlash bay, and, by earliest dawn, ran through a stormy ocean to Liverpool, which we reached early the second day. These two nights, like the former, were sleepless.

Engaging a passage to New York, in the packet ship Pacific, to sail next morning, I told Captain Wait, how I had been deprived of rest. He recommended a warm bath before going to bed, in Liverpool. This procured, I believe, some sleep ; but, certainly, from Liverpool to New York, embarking November 9, and landing December 22, I had not a wink of sleep. It was dark when we landed. I resorted to a warm bath, got into a comfortable bed, and slept, as I had done before leaving Edinburgh ; nor did I again want sleep, nightly, for three years.

Crossing the Atlantic, my sleeplessness became subject of conversation. One prescribed laudanum, but that had no effect ; another opium, which also failed ; a third said, if I got tipsy, that would do ; but that did not. I drank grog, which only made me sick, and that, for the first time, at sea.

The beginning of January, 1837, while lodged in a tavern at Willoughby, Ohio, I was seized with erysipelas in the leg, a disease I have been long subject to, and during five months was without sleep. After that period, sleep returned gradually. For many weeks I dozed by times, and had strange dreams ; one of them so distinct and beautiful that I wrote it down, and it was really worthy of record. The attack of erysipelas, conjoined with other diseases, rendered me lame and extremely feeble during the remainder of my stay in Ohio — eighteen months ; and, after that, for four years and four months, in Canada, with frequent attacks of erysipelas and rheumatism, I was never strong, and all the time lame ; often, indeed, at death's door, in the most wretched condition, separated from my family, and, for the most part, without sympathy, or a friend to whom I could unbosom my griefs. The loss

of a beloved daughter crowned my calamities, and finally barred out '*Nature's soft nurse.*' My children, four daughters and a son, the youngest now twenty-seven years of age, grew up, every way well; and my great consolation was, that whatever beset me, still my family would be prosperous and happy. Alas! when least expecting a reverse in that quarter, even when glorying over pleasant letters recently received from my daughters, I heard that the second was dangerously ill. I lay in agony two weeks, and then had the melancholy assurance of her death.

‘Tired nature’s sweet restorer, *balmy sleep*,  
He, like the world, his ready visit pays,  
Where fortune smiles. The wretched he forsakes;  
Swift on his downy pinion, flies from woe,  
And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.’

After seven months of this period of sleeplessness, I consulted Dr. Widmer, of Toronto, reputed the most experienced physician in Upper Canada. He advised to dine early, and eat nothing after, before going to bed; which, till this day, has afforded the most comfort. His medicine — acetate of morphia, which I took at two distinct times, for ten days together — had no effect. Corresponding with the doctor, he expressed an opinion that my sleeplessness proceeded from excitement of the brain, caused by much reading and writing on politics, which I told him was an entire mistake, as I read and wrote little, and troubled myself not at all with politics. In fact, my troubles spring from unsettled private affairs, as my family and friends well know.

After three years of this sleeplessness, being in Montreal, I advised with Dr. Robinson, but he could do nothing for me. Telling him that few would credit my accounts of sleeplessness, he said he could, having a patient, Mr. Jamieson, who had not slept the last five months.

For a year past, I have been attacked with no disease; and within these last six months, spent on the sea board, have been gradually regaining strength — partly, I think, from salt air: nor do I despair of sleeping, were all circumstances favorable. Long weakened with attacks of erysipelas, I am not able to take that degree of exercise which, in former days, contributed so much to brace my system; neither have I now sufficient stimulus, in any way. With these, I feel confident that sleep might be recovered.

Wherever I abide, this sleeplessness has been matter of jest; and few sympathize in my calamity, one of the most trying our nature can be exposed to. Fortunately, a native buoyancy of spirit sustains me against every jest, and the world’s humors are repelled by my own.

Since coming to this city of ‘*notions*,’ where everything is talked about, but nothing decided, I have been beset with inquiries, doubts and denials. Some proposed watching me night and day, so that I might be *caught napping*, and this they were welcomed to do; but did not. I then cast abroad a handbill, offering a *benefit* to any charitable society who might choose to bring together a multitude for wonderment, and thus have a fair trial instituted; but none have come forward; and *doctors*, as they have hitherto *differed*, may differ in opinion still.

Various books on the subject have been laid before me — McNish on the ‘*Philosophy of Sleep*,’ and John Mason Good, M. D., on the ‘*Study of Medicine*.’ The first author, in my humble opinion, is anything but *philosophical*. He amuses with many stories, but comes to no conclusion on the principal subject discussed. He

mixes up *absence of mind*, or what should rather be called *intensity of thought*, with sleep, which, to me, appear distinct things. He speaks of sleeplessness being a 'habit,' and 'habitual ;'—states that General Pichegru did, with only one hour's sleep a day, through a whole year's campaign,'—and mentions others, who 'remained weeks, months, or even years, *if authors are to be believed*, awake.' Now, why should he refer us to authors, thus to question their authority, after he had settled the point *dictatorially*, in a previous chapter, where he says, sleep '*cannot in any case be entirely dispensed with* ;' and, elsewhere, deciding against the entire want of it as '*fabulous*.'—Who *assured* him of this?

Dr. Good is not thus contradictory. He sets forth views and theories, supporting them with instances of sleeplessness. Mr. Cooch, he says, 'gives a singular case of a man who never slept, and yet enjoyed a very good state of health till his death, which happened in the seventy-third year of his age. He had a kind of dozing, for about a quarter of an hour, once a day ; but, even that was not sound sleep, though it was all he was ever known to take.'

Now, Sir, in all this we have yet no *certainty* ; and, opinion after opinion, may be advanced without any good whatever. I say, a final issue may be reached, if I, here, in Boston, were subjected to trial ; and, for the sake of science,—to have a fact established curious in the history, habits, and constitution of man, I am willing to subject myself to the test.

On various occasions, I have been *almost* asleep, but do not think I have absolutely been so, during these last four years and five months. In September, 1840, I travelled, with only one short pause from St. Catharines, Upper Canada, to New York, in stages, steamboats, and rail-cars; talking much and continually excited with varied scenes and occurrences. Arrived at New York, I immediately lay down in a luxurious bed, closed round with mosquito curtains ; and, next morning, declared to a fellow-traveller, that I would be unwilling to *swear* that I had slept none. Nine months afterwards, seated in the door of my log-house in the woods of Canada, during the stillness of a summer evening, and when the air all around was loaded with smoke, I verily believe I would have slept, had not a neighbor roused me. Five months later, in Kingston, thinking all my vexations in that quarter ended, and that I should soon rejoin my family in Scotland, I had a delightful night, and told my landlady that I had *nearly* been asleep ; and, reaching Quebec a week afterwards, enjoying the same hope, and worn out with travel, I dozed and dreamp't, which is certainly an approach to sleep. Six months ago, reaching Providence from New York, surrounded with agreeable objects, and entertained, for a whole day, in the most delightful manner, I flung myself into bed ; and, if Morpheus did not obtain dominion over me, I had at least perfect repose.

These approaches to sleep are acknowledged, not for surrender of what I have maintained invariably ; but to confirm the main position. In Ohio, two persons came into my bed-room, while my head was covered over, and, because I did not speak to them, said I was asleep ; so, here in Boston, while reclining on a sofa, with closed eyes. On both these occasions, I knew the train of my thoughts perfectly. In another place, the servant who put on my fire in the morning, reported that, on two occasions, he had found me asleep. I was confident he had not, and tested the matter another morning, unknown to him. I covered up my head ; kept silent ; let him question me ; and, then discovered, that it was, only from my being attentive, that his voice was audible, through the covering.

Both the doctors, above quoted, allow that sleep may be dispensed with for long periods ; and, if for weeks and months, why not for years and forever ? I have

not only done without it for years ; but, for months, have simultaneously suffered from acute pain, and torture of mind, still worse than that: nor could I have endured, but for a cherished principle, that, to endure is duty.

I have tried many remedies :—a hop-pillow, hop-tea, &c. &c. &c. Winter before last, at Kingston, Canada, in great misery from the deprivation, I resorted to laudanum, again and again—fifty drops, seventy drops, ninety drops, and, upwards of a hundred; yet, still, I had no sleep. Here, in Boston, I have been advised to get Mesmerized; and, if professors of that art are willing to try, they may try. Most surely to succeed, I say, —‘let me rest from persecution, because of principles and opinions, which has been unrelenting during thirty-five years; give me my rights as a British subject in Canada, and deeds to land there vexatiously withheld; restore to me property in Britain taken out of my possession under most iniquitous pretences; and, let me rejoin my children, in such a happy home as I once enjoyed.’

All this is now submitted, frankly and sincerely, to your learned and liberal profession.

ROB. F. GOURLAY.

*Marlboro' Hotel, Boston, May 10, 1843.*

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#### SLEEPLESSNESS.—CONTINUED.

*To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.*

SIR,— You have heard of my sleeping two hours; and wish, for publication, a detail of circumstances, which I now furnish.

June 16, the British steamer being to sail, I was employed from daylight till noon, writing and despatching letters. Ten minutes past 12, the last was mailed. I then ran to a newspaper office, purchased the paper of that day, and mailed it also.

By this time the President of the United States was approaching; and I stood, in heavy rain, till the procession had passed the post-office. After that, I was engaged with business till near two o'clock,—sometimes in, sometimes out of doors, and got drenched. Returning home, I put off my wet clothes, and went to dinner at half-past 2 o'clock. About 3, I retired to my bed-room; sat down to read, having pulled off my coat and boots, but in a quarter of an hour, was overpowered with drowsiness; flung myself into bed, under the coverlid; immediately became warm; perspired; and, soon after, slept, soundly and certainly! Awakening, I deemed it, for a few minutes, morning; rejoiced that the weather looked propitious for the Bunker-hill celebration; but, feeling my clothes, became undeceived; started up; looked from my window to the Old South, and saw by the clock that it was half an hour past 5, P. M. In fact, I had been in the land of Nod, as near as may be, the time above named.

One of the newspapers, with the too customary practice of misrepresenting, reported, that, I had ‘*been caught napping*,’—but, this statement was immediately conveyed to my fellow-boarders, and is perfectly correct. Some inquired, if I felt refreshed; but no perceptible effect was produced; and the occurrence has, in no way, changed my long-established habit. I have not slept since; and, now, that the weather is hot, I have many restless and miserable nights.

‘From short (as usual) and disturbed repose  
I wake: how happy they, who wake no more!’

*Marlboro' Hotel, July 15, 1843.*

ROB. F. GOURLAY.

THE  
**NEPTUNIAN.**

**No. 27.**

**PLANS**

FOR BEAUTIFYING NEW YORK, AND FOR ENLARGING AND  
IMPROVING THE CITY OF BOSTON.

—  
“Go to, let us build us a City.”  
—

To His Honor, The Mayor.

*New York, July 15, 1835.*

SIR:—I am author of “PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF EDINBURGH,” which were published at different times in Scotland, some years ago; and one of which was dispatched from thence to Washington, with a suggestion, that “CITY BUILDING” might be reduced to a science, of incalculable value in new settlements, where thousands of cities are yet to be founded.

During a residence of eighteen months in this city, I have observed many parts which might have been better planned; but, which, now, from value of property and entanglement of interests, cannot be easily, if ever, altered; and, I have projected designs, in other quarters, which would admit, from their convenience, economy, and magnificence, of any requisite expenditure, in execution.—It would be vain, however, to particularize, till called on, and till the public are prepared to listen.

When the water Report was approved, by vote of citizens, it seemed a fair opportunity to throw out a hint, as to a species of improvement wherein a supply of water was essential; and, I chose a spot for illustration, at once fully in the public eye, and where the interest of a wealthy individual was more immediately concerned. To him I addressed a letter, with a sketch; and a copy being shown to many others, was highly approved of, by all.

It was my intention, at an early day, to present one to the Board of Aldermen; but, not being professional, I had to employ a Draughtsman, and he has delayed, till now, furnishing me with what accompanies this letter.

My proposal is, to cut off the narrow point of the Park; and, where the gate now stands, to enclose a circular space with a Jet d'eau in the centre, and basin for the reception of the falling water, engraved with shrubbery, and, a few weeping willows.

ERRATUM.—Page 348, for “a monstrous fool of a parson,” read, a monstrous little fool of a parson.

The Croton water, by report, is to rise to seven feet above the highest roof in the city, which would afford a Jet of some 40 or 50 feet. — In hot weather, the view of this would be delightfully refreshing, and the air, around, would be actually cooled by the projected stream. Indeed, were citizens accustomed to such luxuries, they would desire to have fountains throughout, in every place adapted for them; — such as the Bowling green, Franklin square, Chatham square, &c., &c; — nor would there be any waste of water, as that could be conducted to other useful ends; and, there is a purpose it might be applied to, of infinite importance, in rendering the city more healthy, which, if required, could be pointed out; and, which the water itself might regulate, on the beautiful principle, in operation at Greenock, in Scotland. (Planned by Mr. Thom.)

By cutting off the point of the Park, great convenience would result in the thoroughfare, to and from Barclay street, Beekman street, &c. Carriages setting down, and taking up company at the Theatre, Hotels, Churches, &c., would avoid confusion, by sweeping round the Fountain; while the danger to foot passengers, at the crossings, would be greatly lessened.

The Park, itself, would be improved, as the narrow point causes a huddle, and tends to lessen it, in appearance. The gate, too, is unsightly, and gives place to nuisance.

The cost of exhibiting this improvement would be trifling, as a temporary Jet could be introduced; and, when the Croton water was brought into the city, the public would be fully prepared to sustain it, and others of the kind.

It is unnecessary to say more at present, as the accompanying drawing will make all sufficiently clear; and, I have now only to beg that you will honor me by laying the same, with this letter, before the Board.

Most respectfully yours,

ROB. F. GOURLAY.

To His Honor, THE MAYOR.

*To be communicated to the Board of Aldermen:—*

Astor House, (No. 168,) Nov. 21, 1842,

Sir—Last Friday, I called at the City Hall, to hand you a **PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT OF NEW-YORK**, with a copy of a letter, submitted to the Board of Aldermen by the then Mayor, July, 1835.

Its reception, by the Board, was announced in the Newspapers of the day; but I left the city a few weeks after, and returned only last week.

On coming to town, several of my friends congratulated me, on the completion of what I suggested.—**THE FOUNTAINS**,—and I presume there will be no question on that score.

Should I now be honored with notice, there is a subject of much greater importance to be spoken of; and, as to that, I left a packet, in care of Cornelius N. Lawrence, the day on which I departed for Ohio, of which I have still a copy.

In Ohio, after the **great fire**, I addressed His Honor, on the subject of rebuilding; but, most likely, that is destroyed; though I retain a copy.

Had I seen you on Friday, I meant to have requested a search for my original Plan and description of the Fountains, and would still. Many individuals remember seeing it, as now copied out.

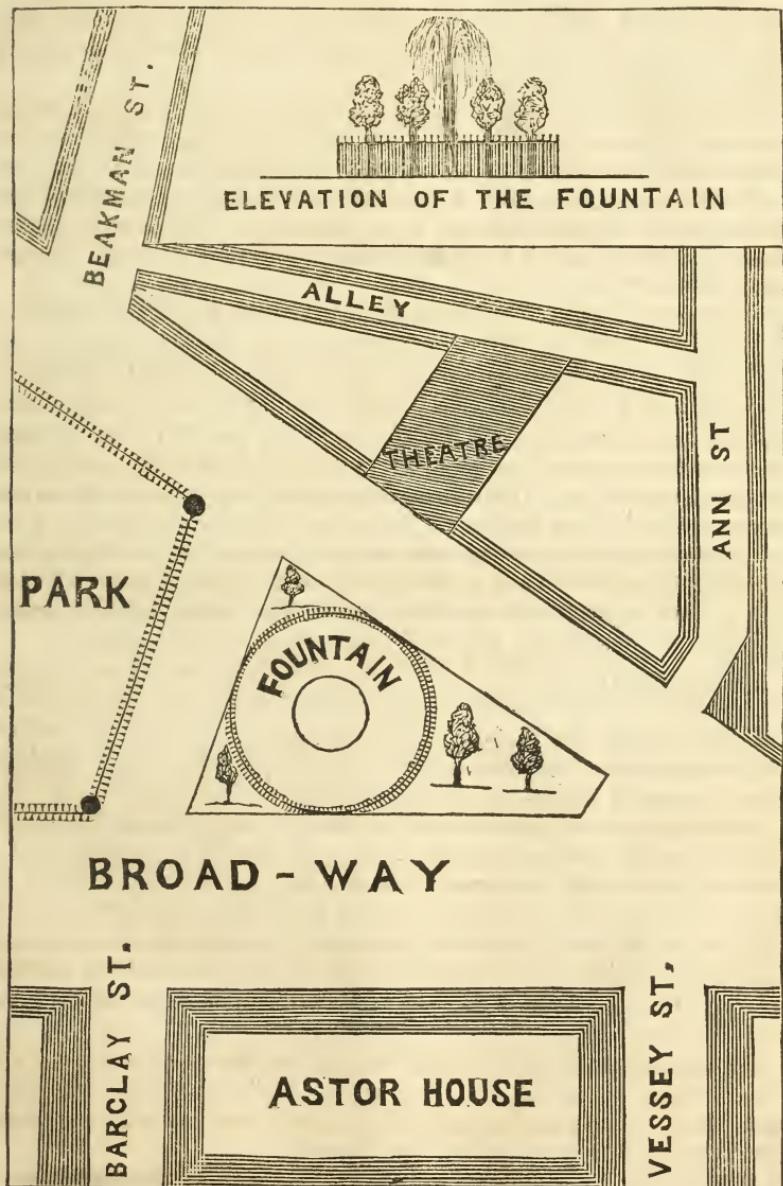
Being in feeble health, I dare not venture much out, in face of the cutting frost-wind; but, would be much gratified with an acknowledgement of this, and an interview, should your engagements admit, one of these three days I still propose remaining in the City.

I am, respectfully, yours,

ROBERT F. GOURLAY.

# Plans for the Improvement of New York,

BY R. F. G.—No. 1.



## NOTE.

*Boston, Aug. 16, 1844.*

IMMEDIATELY after my letter, 1835, with the plan, was delivered at the City Hall, I left New York, for two weeks. On returning, a friend told me he had seen from Newspapers, that the subject was under consideration of the Board of Aldermen, and advised me to call for compensation; but, I said it would be soon enough, when Croton River was brought to the city. I forthwith set off for Ohio; and, there, and in Canada, was detained, by ill health, years beyond expectation.

When the great fire happened in New York, I conceived a grand project for rebuilding, on a plan of magnificence, convenience, and safety from fire, surpassing all that ever had been. A letter, offering services, was despatched to the Mayor; but, soon after, it appeared, that the hurry of individual proprietors, would frustrate this, and it was abandoned. (My letter was dated *January 12, 1836*; and, if it was laid before the Board of Aldermen, may yet be on the file.)

Being at Avon Springs, for health, September 1842, I read an account of the opening of the Fountains, in the New York Herald, and wrote to the Editor, on the subject, but no notice of my letter appeared. Coming to New York, in November following, I copied out the above, and with a plan, handed it in, for perusal of the Mayor. The Clerk had just received these from me, when a person hurried to tell us that Colt had killed himself, and the prison was on fire. This changed the subject; and sure enough, on getting out of doors, I saw the blaze. Being then out of town three days, I had no opportunity of paying my personal respects; but wrote to his Honor on the subject, (November 21,) and came off to New England:—where, till now, I have had no good opportunity to explain. The matter, however, stands on record, at the City Hall, as having been referred to a Committee.

Contemplating many plans for the improvement of New York City, the very first that appeared most essential, was cutting off the sharp corner of the Park; and, my design was, to place an equestrian statue of Washington in the centre of the cleared space:—which was set aside for the Fountain, when it appeared certain that Croton water would be introduced.

I was informed, 1835, that, without the leave of Congress, the Park could not be lessened, or altered; but, if so, that could readily be obtained; and, I yet think, cutting off the corner by far the most essential improvement for the convenience of all,—to say nothing of bettering appearances. The Fountain, in the midst of a cleared space, would then be well displayed; and be a marked object, from every point; besides, in my humble opinion, a simple jet would be in far better taste, than the fantastic forms, in which the water is now made to play.

My chief object, in publishing my letter to the Mayor, with my plan, is to draw attention to this subject, which appears highly important. The fountain, where it now is, produces little effect; and in fact, adds to the huddle of the ugly gate, and loathsome corner.

My wood-cut has been poorly executed; but, readers will have no difficulty in conjuring up something better.

No. 1. *Second Series.*

TO HIS HONOR, THE MAYOR OF BOSTON: (To be communicated to the Board of Aldermen.)

SIR,— Your brief dismissal of my small offering to the city, last summer, was such as any stranger presuming to advise, might expect, in any country. But, having now resided here, upwards of twelve months, intrusion may be more warrantable.

What moves me now to trouble you, is, seeing a new street in progress near Providence Rail-Road Depot (that looking into the Botanic Garden,) which might, I think, be greatly improved, by the introduction of sunk areas, in front of buildings. These were adopted in the capital of Scotland, seventy years ago, and, at first, only eight feet wide. Soon after, when the new town was planned, ten feet was thought better; and, twenty years ago, when the second new town arose, twelve feet was not deemed too much.

There is a sunk area in front of the Tremont House, and others throughout the city; but all are too narrow; and so it is in New York. Had Tremont House been set back twelve, instead of six feet, many advantages would have been gained. Not only would there have been abundant light and air to the basement, &c., from an area of twelve feet, but the appearance of the whole would have been improved, particularly the portico; which, instead of being a daub, might have had its due proportions,—with elegance and comfort.

In business streets, sunk areas may be objected to; but, in others of the first class, they should never be dispensed with. They admit of entrance to the first floor, either on the level, or by steps, less or more, as required, without breaking the general uniformity; and, also afford easy access to the basement, in the same way.

When streets are lined over uneven ground, they become still more advantageous, admitting of several stories below the grading of the street,—and, all well aired and lighted, as is the case in several parts of Edinburgh.

Some weeks ago, being in the office of public lands and streets, a circular, with a plan by Alexander Wadsworth, was handed to me; and, I then left with the clerk some written hints on the subject. Since then, having repeatedly viewed the progress of the work, I have become more and more persuaded, that all parties would be benefited, by a due consideration of the whole matter. As there is only one house yet building, it is not too late; and, assuredly, purchasers of lots could well afford to pay for additional space, to admit of areas in front,—with liberty to build coal-cellars, under the pavement. The street in question, being now heightening with travelled earth, also invites to the adoption of the plan.

I am, Sir, yours, respectfully,

*Marlboro' Hotel, May 17, 1844.* ROB'T F. GOURLAY.

## No. 2.

TO THE SAME.

SIR,— Some weeks ago I indulged myself in the pleasure of writ-

ing to you, on the subject of sunk areas, and my letter has probably been referred to the Committee on Streets. This being on a kindred subject, I shall be glad to have honored in the same way, after being submitted to the Board of Aldermen.

Walking from the Common to Washington street, two objects have often caught my eye, as soliciting improvement;—the first so obvious, that, doubtless, it is in contemplation to effect it,—I mean cutting off a corner building which intercepts the direct line between Winter and Summer streets. The other not so obvious; and which, perhaps, the law may not authorize,—setting back the buildings in Summer street, numbered 10, 14, and 16, some ten or twelve yards, to admit of trees being planted in front; and, by which, Trinity Church would be fully, and finely displayed.

I might not have troubled you with this, had not the case been one of many throughout the city, where a little management and compromise with individual proprietors may be made to contribute greatly to enjoyment. Indeed, strangers cannot help being struck with certain beauties, peculiar to the streets of Boston, from the introduction of trees; and, it is much to be wished, that this kind of beauty were sufficiently appreciated by those in authority, who may make the most of it. I am, respectfully yours,

June 7, 1844.

ROBT F. GOURLAY.

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NOTE.

Throwing these two letters before the public, I would press attention to both subjects. A second house is now built, in the street alluded to, where sunk areas are recommended; and, it is not too late to have these altered, so that all may be benefited,—not only proprietors of buildings and lots, but the public.

As to the other subject, I would also solicit notice; and, shall point out another instance where, setting back a few buildings, and introducing trees, a fine effect would be produced:—I mean, near the head of Franklin street. There, some shabby wooden buildings, making part of Tattersal's stables, could readily be set back, and a building erected in the same line with those fronting the Crescent.—Were a society of Amateurs for city-building instituted, hundreds of such instances might be referred to, for the society's judgment, influence, and direction. Citizens of Boston, so exemplary in orderly moral and religious habits, would do well to consider, that, physical order and beauty may be made accessory to mental refinement, enjoyment, and perfection. We are here, on earth, with chaos and black night, to order and enlighten; and, when order and light are restored, paradise will again be realized.—Capital is essential; and, nothing can be more commendable than efforts to secure the almighty dollar, provided, that is ever looked to as a means, not an end. I would, indeed, stimulate the merchants of Boston to become rich, that they may have the utmost enjoyment of this world, by rightly applying their wealth.

Were the moral world right, the physical would speedily be righted; but, as progress to perfection is gradual, it is well to reflect that moral and physical improvement naturally aid each other, and should go, hand in hand.

To His Excellency, GEORGE N. BRIGGS, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—His Honor, JOHN REED, Lieutenant Governor—the Hon. ROBERT F. DANIELS, and THOMAS FRENCH Councillors.

*Gentlemen :*

No. 1.

Having, on a former occasion, expressed happiness from your acquaintance, and hope that Providence might order it for good, I now submit, to your judgment and taste, this plan for enlarging and improving the city of Boston, as practical commencement.

The capital of Massachusetts and New England, already stands preëminent, on the roll of time, as the cradle of liberty; but, now that steam-ship navigation and railways are established, it bids fair to become one of the largest cities on earth. Boston must speedily be the grand landing-place from Europe; and, with railways eradicating to every point of the American Continent, calculations may proceed with certainty. During the last twenty years, Boston has doubled its population; but, now, the ratio of increase must be greater far. Fifty years hence it will contain 500,000 souls; and, within a century, a million at least. The Peninsula is already crowded; and, here, want of forethought has caused confusion past remedy; but, there is a field beyond, which may be planned out, and built on, with every advantage. Seventy years ago, the capital of Scotland was noted for discomfort. The necessities of a warlike age had driven the people within narrow bounds, to have protection from rocks and ravines. By-and-bye, buildings shot up to giddy heights, for want of room; but, at last, a stupendous bridge gave access to a plain, whereon a new town grew up, on a regular plan, unrivalled for beauty and convenience. So it may be here, more easily, and on a grander scale.

*Gentlemen :—*A single glance, below, will give an idea. Imagine yourselves at the top of the State House surveying the finished work. Behold the crescent of three miles in length, with pleasure-grounds in front, and these embracing the outspread waters of Charles River. See the city around, and that embosomed in an amphitheatre of surpassing beauty,—“with hills, and dales, and woods, and glittering spires.” Next, turn sea-ward, and refresh the eye among the green islands of the harbor, with old ocean bearing towards it ships from every clime. Then, estimate the glory of Boston!!

*Gentlemen :—*Nothing more is wanted to realize all this, but your sound sense, your patriotism, your religion:—yes, the God whom you worship is a God of harmony, and beauty, and order. He will smile on such an undertaking; for, it is obeying his law and forwarding his design.

*Gentlemen :—*Should I obtain your approbation, I shall hand you a copy of this plan, to be laid before the city authorities; and, at all times, shall be happy to explain. The city authorities can readily consult the people. Other plans may be advertised for, and the

best adopted; so, that, by next session of the Legislature, your final sanction may be obtained.

Permit me, now, to repeat acknowledgment of respect and esteem.

Your obedient and very humble servant,

*Marlboro' Hotel,  
Boston, May 9, 1844.* } ROB'T. F. GOURLAY.

No. 2.

TO THE SAME.

Gentlemen :

It is more than possible that a first sight of my General Plan, for improving and enlarging Boston, may generate ideas, in many, that it is fanciful and extravagant.

Allow me to provide a plea against such impressions;—and, first, let it be known that, for many years, I have studied City building with a view of reducing it to a science—especially important in America, where thousands of cities are yet to be founded. I have done this, with every opportunity, these last twenty years,—in London, Edinburgh, New York, Cleveland Ohio, and Kingston Canada.

In the years 1829 and 1831, I published plans for improvement of Edinburgh, which you may see any day; and, along with this letter, I submit a printed testimonial from an eminent civil Engineer, wherein these plans are favorably spoken of.

My plans for Boston have had my attention these last twelve months; and nothing perhaps but the leisure I am here subjected to, and the extraordinary calamity of being without sleep, could have led to plans so extensive; and, which I flatter myself, are perfect. A vivid imagination enables me to bring, to my mind's eye, objects for study; and these can be arranged, and rearranged at pleasure, as readily as though material substances were present, to be seen and handled: — Thus, are watches of the night often beguiled.

There are, on the face of my general plan, many things requiring special plans, sections, and elevations, for a right understanding of them; and, if required, all shall be cheerfully furnished, with explanations on every point.

<sup>2</sup> The sub-urban railways may be formed, at any time — now, or after, as they interfere little with property. I first suggested such in London, and afterwards in Edinburgh, where one is now executed; — as also at Liverpool. Many reasons concur to make such desirable in Boston.

The formation of Washington Square, and Washington Circus, would require power for purchasing and removing buildings; but that might be gradually acted on. So, with opening a new street between Summer street and Federal street,—much wanted.

The grand improvement, — a New Town, should, with least possible delay be taken into consideration, before streets are laid out, and buildings erected, to the increase of difficulties and expense.

The measures adopted for the enlargement of New York are in point. All Manhattan Island, (so far as Haerlem,) has been laid out in avenues and streets. Faithfully yours,

May 10, 1844.

Faithfully yours,  
**ROB. F. GOURLAY.**

No. 3.

## TO THE SAME.

Gentlemen:

The five weeks elapsed, since the date of my second communication, have afforded opportunities of hearing many remarks on my General Plan for enlarging and improving the city of Boston.

All agree, that, if executed, it would be splendid beyond anything of the kind; but, some doubt the possibility of execution, while others startle at expenses. I think, as formerly, that it wants only your virtuous endeavors to execute; and, as it is for the benefit of the State, I apprehend it is your special duty, if there seems sufficient cause.

There are, I find, two Counties in which the property lies—Middlesex and Norfolk. The City authorities are, I understand, functionaries for the first, and certain commissioners for the other. You well know, certainly, as to all such matters, and can proceed accordingly.\*

I calculate, that there are at least 2,000 acres of surface now wholly worthless, from the overflow of water, which, by the proposed improvement, would be raised to immense value. This surface is the very best for building on, by its location and otherwise; and being built on, would become not only healthy, but would impart health to all around.

I conceive, that as no individual proprietor can do aught of himself to increase the value of this surface, and as that value can only grow out of legislation, it will be quite fair to proceed to legislate, and do everything requisite, without hindrance from any one.

I find, that there is a corporate body—the Mill Dam corporation, whose property and rights would be first interfered with.

That corporation could not, I conceive, of itself, do the needful, and hence it may be expected to coöperate, cheerfully and liberally,—first and last.

All parties being concurrent, I can see no difficulty whatever in proceeding; and, I can see clearly, that, so far from expense being incurred, profit would instantly ensue;—first, from confidence, and then from completion.

The New Town of Edinburgh was planned out 70 years ago; and was completed in 30 years. Then, a second New Town was set about,—now also completed. It may be 20 or 30 years since Manhattan Island was laid out for building, on a regular plan, under an act of the Legislature. It has progressed steadily, and has been a mine of wealth, as this in question, may be, more certainly.

In my last communication, it was stated, that certain of the improvements indicated—the Sub-urban Rail-ways &c, may proceed, or not, just as circumstances make advisable; so, the New Town, or city may advance, by parts. That, south of the Mill Dam, may be set about and completed; next, that between the Mill Dam and Cambridge, East Cambridge, and so, onward, to Charlestown, &c. &c.

\* My improvements cover part of three counties,—Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk. The City authorities being functionaries only in the last.

The important point, at this time, is to procure and adopt the best possible plan—mine, or a better, for acting on, under the Legislature, as before said.

I am ready, at any moment, to explain further; but deem it best, thus, to draw on your patience, by little and little.

A copy of my Plan accompanies this, on which you will perceive some variations from the first, and many more may be suggested.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

ROBERT F. GOURLAY.

*Marlboro' Hotel, June 12, 1844.*

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No. 4.

TO THE SAME.

*Marlboro' Hotel, July 4, 1844.*

Gentlemen:

It was my intention to have solicited a personal hearing before the Council, yesterday, on the subject of my Plan for enlarging and improving the City of Boston; but grievous affliction has unmanned me,—accounts of the death of my only son—a merchant—32 years of age, in Australia.

Lest I should not again see you, allow me to say, that I should be happy to explain on every point of the business alluded to. In my three letters, I was purposely brief, that you might not be annoyed with what was out of the routine of your ordinary business; and, by one so little entitled to use liberties as myself. If, either in your individual or corporate capacity, you get a Committee to inspect the Plan, let it be known, that, I shall be ever ready for examination, by the same.

Most respectfully, Yours,

ROB. F. GOURLAY.

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No. 5.

Mr. Gourlay presents his most respectful compliments to the Governor and Council.—As he handed in, at the State House, sometime ago, a second copy of his Plan for enlarging and improving Boston, he deems it right, now, to furnish duplicates of letters on the subject, lest the Plan should be submitted to the city authorities, as accompaniments.

*Marlboro' Hotel, July 10, 1844.*

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#### NOTE.

After laying my Plan before the Governor and Council, I forbore to publish it, with the above letters, till his Excellency was spoken to, and acquiesced. Indeed, as nothing can be carried into execution till a meeting of the Legislature, it was thought that the public at large ought to be made acquainted with the subject; so as to sustain Representatives, should discussion come on.

*To the Legislators of Massachusetts.*

BOSTON, AUG. 26, 1844.

GENTLEMEN: You exist for a year: I may not be alive to-morrow. It therefore behoves me to do, to-day, whatever is most urgent; and, so far as you are concerned, nothing can compare with the execution of my plans for the improvement of this city. You alone can effect this, and doubtless will, so soon as you are fully informed on the subject.—I, therefore, earnestly solicit your gravest attention.

Addressing His Honor, the Mayor of Boston, and His Excellency, the Governor of the State, it was becoming to avoid prolixity:—Now, I may be more particular, and proceed with details. The wood cuts, since procured, will, I trust, make all easily understood.

My first object was the comfort of the ladies. Being now well informed of the Mayor's accomplishments and superior taste,—a scholar, well read, and travelled,—versed in all that is elegant and refined;—him, from whose suggestion Mount Auburn rose into existence;—to him, we may safely consign the Common. He will, assuredly, in good time, see it carpeted, as with velvet of brightest green,—maugre the Committee; and, should the ladies express a wish for the Pagoda and Flower Garden, these will instantly be provided. His Honor may do all this; but you only can, with God's help and legislation, call into being the Grand Crescent and the Boulevards, Circus-Island, the Distributing and Sub-urban Railways, &c. &c.

Reviewing my letters to the Governor and Council, I find, it will be best, now to use them as texts, and discuss the various subjects under distinct heads:—thus.

## MAGNITUDE, GRANDEUR, AND BEAUTY OF BOSTON.

I have said that Boston, fifty years hence, “will contain five hundred thousand souls; and, within a century, a million at least.” It is important that these assertions should be received with confidence; and, I shall endeavor to show that there is nothing, on earth, more certain.

It was not till after I had resided, here, many months, that I arrived at the conclusion. Before then, I was little acquainted with Boston, and its capabilities. I had put it down, as a settled point, that New York was destined to go ahead of all the world;—now, I am inclined to think, that Boston, not New York, will become the Queen of cities.

*First;* let us look to security in war-time. Fortify New York to the utmost:—render it impossible for ships to pass the Narrows, or, into the East River,—still, an army may be landed on Long Island or New Jersey, and march within point blank of New York, so as to lay it in ashes. Not so Boston. Secure the harbor, which can easily be done; and the surrounding country,—with its granite hills, its ravines, and its bogs, will protect from bombardment.

*Second;*—look to advantages for commerce. New York has the

North River, with canals, pouring into that, from all the great lakes ; but Boston has better than all. Describe a circle, round it, of one hundred miles, and you have, within that circle, physical and moral power beyond what can be found in any like space on the globe. You have innumerable streams,—all affording water-power, down to the sea-shore ; and, you have the intelligence, steady habits, sound morals, enterprise, and efficiency of New England. Even the barrenness of the soil will stimulate all these good qualities, and excite them to the most profitable action ;— witness the winter harvest, and exportation of ice. On the east and south, New York has the arid plains of Long Island and New Jersey :—the first, without water-power : the second, with sluggish streams begetting only languor and inaction. On the west, it is hemmed in by the Catskill Mountains ; and, on the north, by the rocky ridge which embraces this more favored section of the Union.

At Boston, ship navigation terminates ; and, while there is no rival in trade, north and south, over 200 miles, the whole of New England must glory in its grand centre.

Southward, Philadelphia cuts off the commerce of New York ; and, with spirit, Albany and Troy may take from it much, as Glasgow has, lately, taken all from Greenock.

The Great Lakes are not dependent on New York. Twenty-five years ago, I showed how ships from the Ocean might navigate these ; but, the ignorant people of Canada and its vile local government, would neither do, nor let do. Now, however, John Bull is putting forth his feelers ; and, with common sense, the St. Lawrence may be made the grand outlet of its parent lakes ; while the Mississippi, in like manner, is the natural duct for the produce of its valley. In short, when mind contends with mind, Boston will be found superior to New York, and go ahead of her. But, to the superiority of Boston, in all that has been enumerated, when we add that which is to result from her becoming the grand landing-place from Europe, all comparison will cease ; and, within ten years, this will be the case.

I am told that Portland harbor is better than that of Boston, and more free of ice :—also, that it is nearer to Lake Ontario and Montreal, by 14 miles, and, much nearer to Quebec ; so that, there was once an idea of conveying the British mails by way of Portland. Other advantages, in favor of Boston, however, leave no doubt of its being the preferable place for landing. It is only once in many years that its harbor is frozen up ; and, when required, it will not be difficult to erect a pier, beyond all freezing, to be resorted to on extraordinary occasions. In other respects, the superiority of Boston, as a landing-place, is decided ; and, it is highly important for you, gentlemen, fully to appreciate this. It is what no time can alter ; and, on its certainty, you may proceed with plans which will give perfect confidence in establishing lines of communication, both by water and land.

Arrived at Boston, from Europe, the traveller can be as soon at New York and all beyond, to the south, as if he had sailed, direct,

for that port; while he can be much sooner at Albany, Ogdensburg, Montreal, Quebec, and all to the west, north, and east.

The British and American Governments have now agreed, that the Royal Mail Steamers shall sail, direct, between Liverpool and Boston.\* Already, the passage can be made *via* Halifax, in twelve days; but, set aside the time wasted by going and landing there,—delays, and dangers from fogs, ice, and greater distance, we may fairly conclude, that an average passage may be made in ten days:—then, enlarge, and improve the construction of steamers: fit them up in the best way for *many*, with comfort without extravagance: carry 500 or 1,000 instead of 100:—then, respectable Farmers and Mechanics may be comfortably accommodated, across the Atlantic, for 30 dollars; nay, with competition, for less.

When this is the case, every spirited young man in Europe and America, will be inspired with the laudable ambition of seeing the world aright, before he settles himself down for life. He will save up a hundred dollars; and, with that, be able to cross and recross the Atlantic, so as to become personally acquainted with the most noted objects, on both sides of it. Let but ten years of such visiting go on, and say if it would be possible, with the amount of intelligence and good feeling gained, for the veriest fool or greatest blackguard to embroil the nations in war,—King or Commoner,—Priest, or President.—But, not to forget our present business, think what Boston would be then!—One steamer, at least, with 500 respectable passengers, would be daily arriving, and departing. This is by no means more than what may be within ten years; and, when the whole population of Europe is roused up, and America thickly settled, it will be looked back to, as a bagatelle.

Finally, I would have you look proudly to Boston as the focus of intelligence for America. Here, literature and science, the arts, and refinement of every kind, will be on tiptoe, to give and receive. Here, merchants will be most awake to turns of the market: here bankers, and brokers, and insurance companies will have their chiefest seat: here, the newsmonger and the politician will be widest awake: here, fashion will proclaim her mandates, to this continent; and, here, the gospel will have freest course, to be glorified.

Gentlemen!—to me, this is a glorious subject; for it realizes my fondest hopes. Forty-three years ago, my life was devoted to bettering the condition of the English poor. Hitherto, I have wholly failed, for the very magnitude of my projects excited jealousies, and stirred up opposition. As yet, I have had no aid from the rich; nor can I command the coöperation of the poor; for, “the destruction of the poor is their poverty.”—But, give us Steam-ships and Railroads in abundance: let all be educated and have fair opportunity: let wild lands be rightly laid out, and honestly disposed of:—then, poor-laws and poor-rates may everywhere be dispensed with: pauperism will cease; and, the kindly affections do all that may be required for casualties.

I never was an advocate for the emigration of the ignorant and

\* This was a mistake.

ragged. Twenty-seven years ago, I said, "Canada is worthy of something better than a mere guidance to it, of the blind and the lame: it has attractions to stimulate desire, and place its colonization above the aids of necessity." If this was true of Canada, what should we say of the United States,—possessing every variety of climate, with the greatest extent of fertile soil on the face of the earth,—with rivers surpassing all others, for the purposes of commerce; and, with a population drawing intelligence from every nation under heaven?

Individuals and nations have, hitherto, considered emigration merely as a result of necessity. I have ever pointed to it, as an object of ambition; and, when mankind are rightly moved by this principle,—then, we shall see the first great law acted on, with the best consequences. They will be "fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth!"—then, mankind will recover their pristine strength:—then we shall have nobles of nature; and the millenium will be insured;—perhaps, endless milleniums.

Gentlemen:—emigration and immigration have been so neglected and misunderstood, that both are decried. Europeans deplore and retard the former; while Native Americans are banding together against the latter! Oh, miserable folly and infatuation!—Oh, that all were enlightened,—that all may see, how all may be benefited, and contribute to each other's happiness.

I have effected nothing; but Time, the greatest Reformer, will solve the problem, and harmonise every jarring element. Steamship navigation will speedily bring nations together; and railroads will entwine the branches of the human family, in indissoluble union. Prepare, then, for the grand interchange of civilities. Let the landing-place from Europe give kindly welcome to strangers; and, let their first impressions, in Boston, be those of delight and admiration.

#### THE GRAND CRESCENT, AND BOULEVARDS.

"Imagine yourselves at the top of the State-House, surveying the finished work."—Ay, indeed, imagine you have, along with you, a dozen Europeans just landed, and participate in their gladness,—gladdened with a sight which Europe can never equal:—Yes, the singularly happy situation of Boston will make it so, if you bestir yourselves; and, you need only pass an Act to create the Grand Crescent and the Boulevards. No other city on earth has such opportunity,—such materials to work with,—such a field to improve,—such a subject for profitable speculation, and certain gain. No other city, on earth, can ever exhibit any thing so elegant—so grand—so perfectly in unison with all its purposes, as this, the capital of Massachusetts and New England.

#### CIRCUS ISLAND.

When you have sufficiently eyed the Grand Crescent, fix attention on Circus Island; and, you will say, that city scenery is worthy

of study. Circus Island will command repose: it will give relief to the enraptured fancy: it will, with its towering — tufted volume, add dignity to the scene: it will extend the range of inquiry and reflection; and, it will give infinite satisfaction, when all its admirable adaptations are comprehended.

In the fulness of time, Circus Island will become the grand centre of Boston; and, when railroads have ramified into every township of the Union, all its building will not over suffice for the accommodation of country visitors. Here, they will step out of the trains, into comfortable lodgings; or, if they rather choose, be conveyed by the distributing and suburban cars, in five minutes, to any quarter of the city without the slightest disturbance, even of the ladies' furbelows.

#### DISTRIBUTING, AND SUB-URBAN RAILWAYS.

The Sub-urban rail-ways have been laughed at, as impracticable, useless, and absurd; but, I do not back out of my proposal. To the Governor, I said, these "*may be formed at any time,—now, or after, as they interfere little with property,*"—and, in fact, they never will interfere with property. It will be the same, as to this, a hundred years hence, as now. Within a hundred years, they will be absolutely required: not only because of the immense growth of the city; but, from its peculiar position and structure. The present city of Boston, confined to the peninsula, will ever be the grand centre of the surrounding parts. The shipping will be mostly ranged around it; and, all trade will converge thither. Not so any other city that I am acquainted with,—London, Liverpool, or New York. They have rivers, along which, to any extent, wharves may be constructed; and, to which roads may proceed, directly, from the country. New York and Philadelphia have two rivers; and, so, the congregating of traders has wider scope; but, Boston, which a hundred years hence will have more trade than any of them, is hemmed in round about by its harbor; while the interior is occupied by a hill, whose altitude presents obstruction to easy passage. Sub-urban rail-roads will do away with every inconvenience resulting from all this. They will lessen the throng and collision in streets: they will afford the speediest conveyance from distant points, and economise the time of business men. This, to citizens of Boston, may seem of small consequence; for, they may say, that a little walking is good for health, and relief from their desks agreeable. Not so with the country merchants, who have but a day or two to spend here,—who are anxious to do the most business, in least time, and with greatest comfort:—to them, the Sub-urban rail-ways will be invaluable. They will be able, by these, to visit the wholesale stores, in every quarter, speedily; and thus get off to their homes without waste of time and with utmost satisfaction.

The enterprise of New Englanders saw that a rail-road to Albany would be of vast consequence to Boston; and, doubting nothing

under the auspices of God, they explored the mountainous region thro' which it had to pass. They found the thing possible, and set about it. Behold, now, the result!

What said a conceited countryman of mine, who travelled over the United States and Canada, 1827, and 1828?—What said Capt. Basil Hall, who had successfully published voyages and travels to Japan, (Loo Choo) and Peru?—What did he register to make himself laughed at, in all coming time? Let an extract from his second volume, on America, page 93, answer.

“ We traversed a considerable portion of the route, over which it has been seriously proposed, I was assured, to carry a rail-road between the cities of Boston and Albany. No single State, still less any section of the Union, it seems, likes to be outdone by any other State, and this feeling of rivalry stimulated by the success of the great Erie Canal—an undertaking, highly favored by nature—has, I suppose, suggested the visionary project in question. In answer to the appeals frequently made to my admiration of this scheme, I was compelled to admit, that there was much boldness in the conception; but, I took the liberty of adding, that I conceived the boldness lay in the conception alone; for, if it were executed, its character would be changed into madness! ”

Captain Hall was not the first wiseacre from the Land o' cakes who underrated Jonathan's powers. Mellish, who settled in the United States nearly twenty years before the Captain's visit,—who travelled extensively, and was the first to collect and publish statistics of the several States, made still a greater fool of himself, by hasty expressions. He published his travels before the war, and another edition, 1815, to which he added a note ridiculing the project of connecting Lake Erie with the Sea, by means of a canal. He said that the Forth and Clyde canal, in Scotland, only about forty miles in length, had required so much time and so much money, to finish it; and, therefore, a canal 350 miles in America, was out of the question:—in fact, he jeered at the “great mon,” who was then striving to accomplish this,—De Witt Clinton,—him, who immortalized himself by its execution. In the same way, Fulton was laughed at, and hooted by the rabble of New York, when he launched his first steam-boat on the North River.

I see no difficulty, whatever, in executing my proposal of suburban rail-ways; yet, this has been scouted by many, on the first glance, as a chimera,—visionary, and erratic.

It was thought of by me, after long consideration how the miseries resulting from the confusion of Boston could be obviated; and, I had concluded, as to its practicability, before seeing the favorable report regarding atmospheric pressure, as a substitute for locomotive engines. Should this be realized, then, in no case could it be applied, so economically, as in Boston. A stationary engine near the State House might do the whole business, within three miles;—convey people, not only to every quarter of the city, in five minutes; but, from Roxbury to Cambridge, or the contrary, without the slightest fatigue or danger.

Already Washington street is crowded to excess; and, every day,

we witness inconvenience from the noise and collision of carriages. What would it be were there a million of residents, and tens of thousands of visitors?—Then, such vents, as I suggest, would be absolutely required and fully appreciated. At present, I only beg of you to inquire, and report.\*

#### WASHINGTON SQUARE.

It has been proposed to erect a statue of the man who was first in war and first in peace, where the Old State House now stands; but, this will be abandoned as soon as my wood-cut appears. No place for such a statue is equal to what I have indicated. There, looking to the cradle of liberty, and protected behind by the church which warded off the cannon shot from the sacred spot, would the hero be exhibited most appropriately.

Faneuil Hall has not length sufficient for its width; and, I have marked off 30 or 40 feet, for addition. Nothing is more wanted than a proper exit from Washington street to the north; and, that will be happily obtained by connecting it, in a direct line, with Portland street, which can easily be effected.

Washington Square is wanted as a grand rallying place for the life and soul of Boston on festive occasions. It would do much to redeem the city from confusion; and, it would give to it dignity character, and consequence.

#### WASHINGTON CRESCENT.

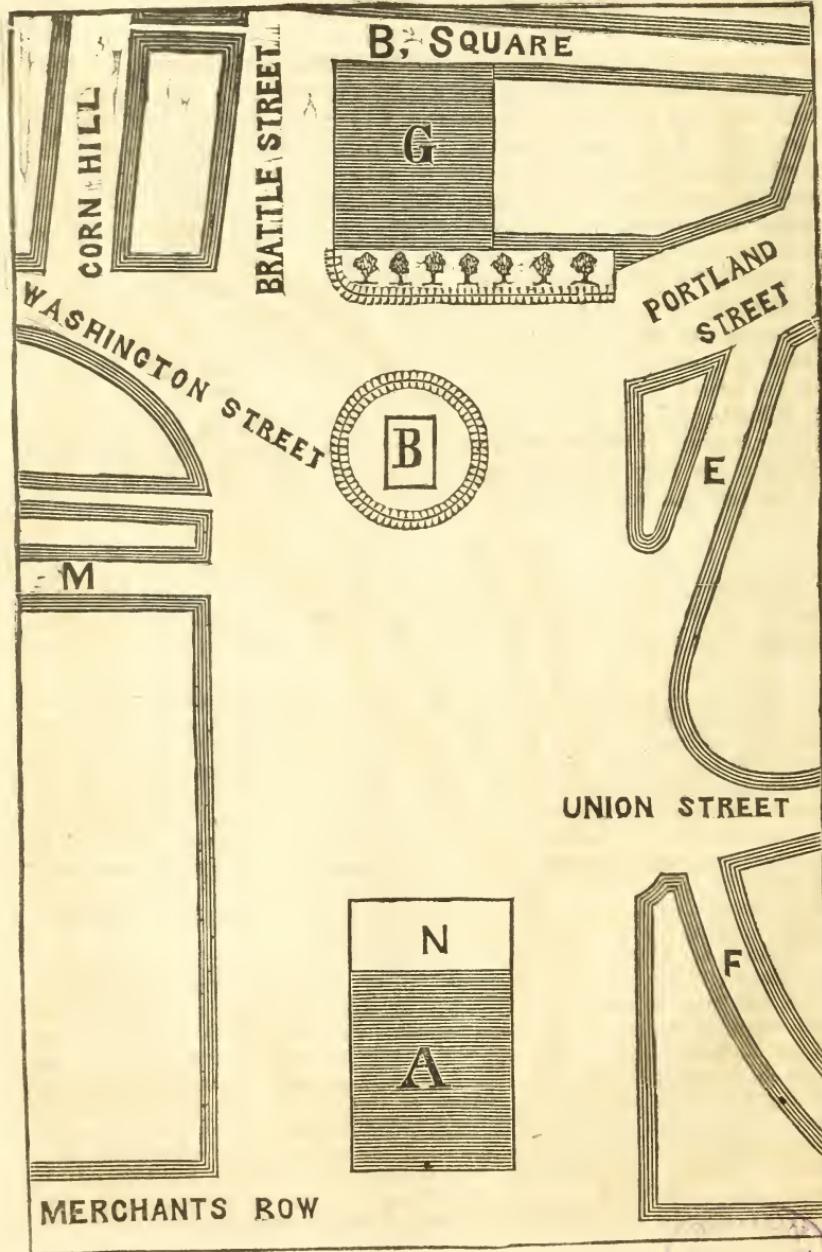
This, too, will be acknowledged as a necessary and fine improvement. When first spoken of, a friend was so struck with advantages to be gained, that he suggested to me getting together some

\* After the above was in type, I conversed with a gentleman, at Nahant, —a native of Boston, who told me he contemplated having a rail-road from Roxbury to State street, for the accommodation of the multitude of business men from that quarter; but, this could not be so easily accomplished as my project of having a centre at the State-House, where all sub-urban rail-roads should meet and distribute. I have now visited Salem, and seen the tunnel, through which the Eastern Rail-road passes across that city; and, though the distance, there, is not great, it shows, plain enough, how rail-roads may be conducted, in cities, without inconvenience or danger. My project, indeed, needs only to be seriously considered, and then it will be found altogether practicable, as well as efficient for Boston.

There is no occasion for executing all the Distributing and Sub-urban rail-ways which appear on my general plan. These are intended to illustrate, and may be altered or lessened as found necessary. A sub-urban rail-way may be first tried, so as to connect Providence rail-road with those to the North and East. Multitudes of travellers are daily arriving here who have no business in the city,—merely on their way, say from Lowell and Portland to Providence and New York, or, the contrary. It would certainly be a great comfort and saving to such travellers, could they proceed, without stopping here; while it would lessen the bustle at the depots, and collision in streets. Were rail-road corporations to go hand in hand for this, it might soon be effected. Afterwards, at any time, sub-urban and distributing rail-ways may be extended through the city, when required.

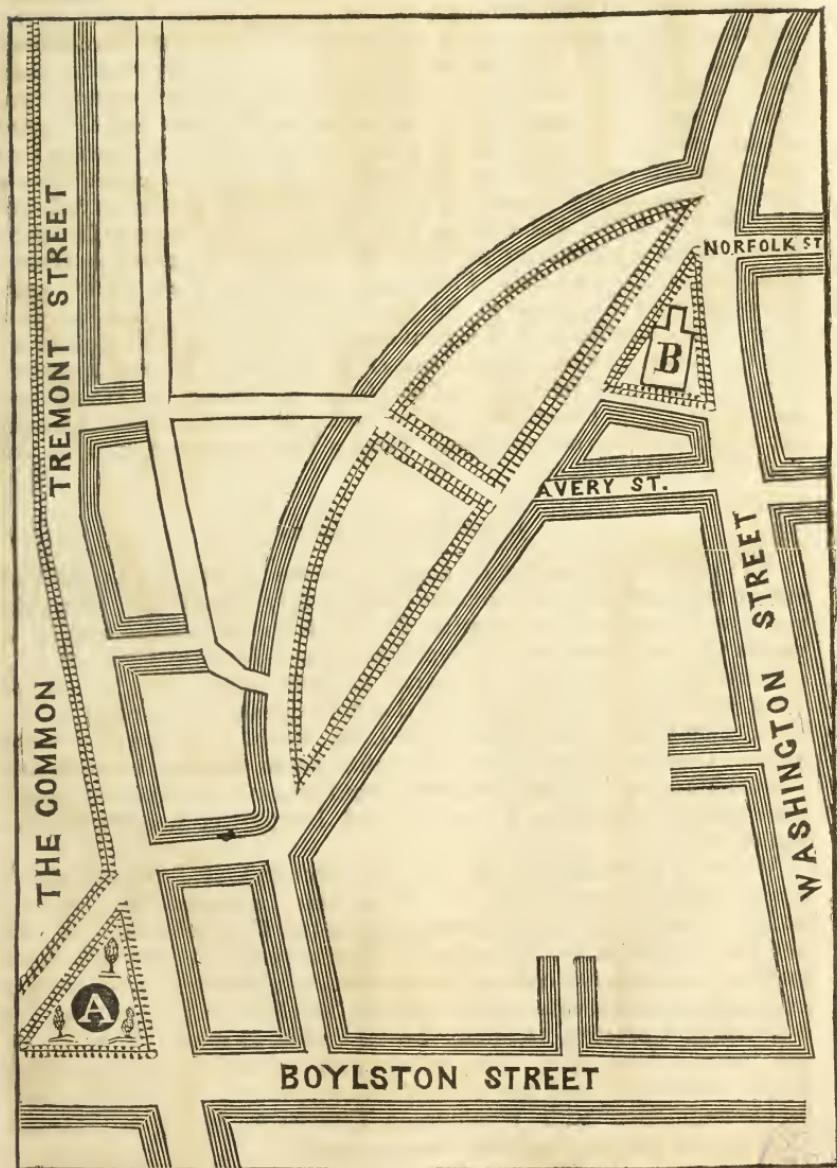
# WASHINGTON SQUARE.

G, Church. B, Statue. A, Faneuil Hall. N, Additior. E, Elm St. F, Ann St. M, Exchange St.



## WASHINGTON CRESCENT.

A. FOUNTAIN.—B. CHURCH.



builders, with whom to purchase up, quietly, all the property as a profitable speculation. It would, indeed, give double value to every foot of land, while buildings of the first class could be substituted for a rookery of rubbish. I, however, can only recommend for the public good; and shall say, that this with many other improvements, should be classed together, for legislation, when a plan for general improvement is considered by you. A church, where I have placed one, would be a striking object, looking down Washington street from the north-east; and, a fountain could not be more happily situated than in the corner cut off from the Common by the opening to and from the Crescent. It would be prominent, along Tremont and Boylston streets; but, its effect would be best, as a vista, terminating the two great shaded walks of the Common. Now that there is a serious move for procuring a necessary supply of water to the city, I feel confident, that this will not be overlooked. Washington Crescent would afford a pleasanter and speedier egress and ingress to Washington street, to and from Providence and New York depot; and, the cutting off the corner of the Common would facilitate the passage both from this and Tremont street. Not only distance saved, but the avoidance of sharp turns, is well worthy of consideration. A lane opened up, in a direct line from the corner to Providence Depot, would be beneficial, and is worthy of consideration. It would save considerable distance, and avoid a very awkward turn at the end of Boylston street.

#### WASHINGTON CIRCUS.

The property being yet of no great value where this is marked out on my general plan, I hope it may be duly attended to. It would serve as a vestibule, on entering Boston, from the south; and, from which the way-farer might direct his steps, — forward, right, or left. —Forward, he would be prepared to pass under the Triumphal Arch, and solemnly call to mind the first decided advantage in the revolutionary struggle. To the left, he would have a grand view across CIRCUS ISLAND: to the right, such another over South Boston Bay; which may be formed into a beautiful sheet of water, with elegant buildings around it, and Dorchester heights in the distance.

When a general plan for the improvement of Boston is about being adopted, it would be well to consider whether there should not be a canal from South Boston Bay to the Empty basin. I would not have it navigable, but only of a certain depth, so as to afford the greatest constant fall into the basin; which might be used either for mill power, or as a cascade, for show. To effect this, there must be a sluice gate erected, at South Boston bridge, to retain the water in the bay, at flood tide. The whole may be made very beautiful, while cleanliness and health would be promoted. This canal may be in connection with Washington Circus; or, between that and Roxbury, as judged best after mature study.

## NEW STREET.

Having mentioned this to the Governor, and marked it on my general plan, I would now solicit your more special attention to the subject, which is really important. There is wanted, in that quarter, a grand approach to the business part of the city ; and, the line directly between the church in Summer street, and that in Federal street, is the best, not only for utility but beauty. The street should be 70 feet wide, with sunk areas ; and, nothing could be more pleasing to the eye than the two most elegant steeples of Boston, terminating the street, each way. At Federal street church, a circus of 200 feet in diameter, should partly embrace that church, and receive into it, besides New street,—Federal street, north and south,—Atkinson street, and Berry street, with Franklin street meeting this last, in direct line, &c. Some large and valuable houses must be pulled down ; but, a vast addition of value would be gained, by rebuilding and completing the whole. In short, it would pay ; while all concerned would be richer, and better accommodated.

Boston has not done enough, in honor of the great man who was born and bred here. The circus might have, in its centre, a lofty pillar bearing his name ; and thus, there would be, in the same neighborhood, Franklin Street, Franklin Crescent, Franklin Circus, and Franklin Pillar.

Should New street be resolved on,—then, opening up Atkinson street, in continuation with it,—widening Congress street, and Exchange street,—a grand, and highly important thoroughfare through the business part of the city, much wanted, would be obtained ; while the Church, in Federal street, would be finely displayed from the north, as well as from the south. Let any one look southward out of Congress street, and this will appear.

## THE WATER, AND ELYSIAN FIELDS.

The extent of water within the Boulevards, around Circus Island and the Elysian Fields, &c. is what I deem necessary for use and ornament. By no means should it be diminished. Had my ideas not been made known, it appears from conversation, that, the empty basin would speedily have been built on. I sincerely trust it never will be, saving to give place for Circus Island. All the rest is desirable for health, cleanliness, and beauty. When the boundaries are fixed, the surface destined for water should be dredged, to the depth of three or four feet; afterwards, to be kept clear of weeds and other admixture. The mud will be required for the elevation of the Elysian Fields ; which may be appropriated either to pleasure, or as a Cemetery. These, at all events, ought not to be built upon.

Charles River can easily be narrowed, upwards ; and thus be improved for navigation.

## WOOD-CUTS, AND SECTIONS.

I would apologize for the wood-cuts, as they are all indifferent ; but, more especially, for the SECTIONS. It was necessary to have

these, that some idea might be formed of what was written about; but, they wofully degrade subjects, which even the painter's finest touches could not do justice to. Mr. Harvey, who, this season, has exhibited many beautiful landscapes at the Athenæum, happily brings to notice what the bright sun and clear atmosphere of America can effect; but, I question if he could find scenes for his pencil, any where, to compare to what the Boulevards and Circus Island will present to view, when adorned with elms of a hundred years growth. The united effects of wood, and water, and architecture, will then be not only unique but wonderful; while sailing vessels, and rail-road trains will superadd life, and motion, and endless variety to the scene. Only think of a train drawn forth from its depot by the steam-horse,\* and threading Circus Island: still more astonishing,—flying across the water, at the rate of a mile a minute, under the influence of atmospheric pressure!

The section of the Boulevards shows the high and low water mark. The unit of altitude, for Boston, is eleven feet and a fourth part. I would have the ceilings of basements in buildings eight feet above this; and, the basement floors higher or lower, as required for special purposes. In every house of the New Town there may be a tank, or sea-water bath, to fill and empty with the tide; or, to be kept full or empty, at pleasure.

The section shows the first floor, of the houses, flush with the street; but this may be raised, one, two, three, or four feet, as may seem best, by means of steps from the foot-pavement, over the sunk area, without changing the appearance of the street.

The breadth of the Boulevards is put at 200 feet, but may be increased or diminished. The trees are farthest apart, in the middle, to indicate that a carriage road may be there; and it might be pleasant, in summer, to drive under the shade of trees; but such road may be, or not. Perhaps, it may be judged best to exclude horses and carriages.

By the section of Circus Island, it appears, that the streets are 18 feet above the water level, in the empty basin; and 14 feet above the rail-road; which admits of the trains—engines and cars—passing

\* I cannot deny myself the pleasure of copying from the writings of Elihu Burritt, the learned blacksmith, his description of the steam-horse:—“I love to see one of these huge creatures, with sinews of brass and muscles of iron, strut forth from his smoky stable, and saluting the long train of cars with a dozen sonorous puffs from his iron nostrils, fall gently back into his harness. There he stands, champing and foaming upon the iron track,—his great heart a furnace of glowing coals: his lymphatic blood is boiling in his veins: the strength of a thousand horses is nerving his sinews: he pants to be gone. He would ‘snake’ St. Peter’s across the desert of Sahara, if he could be fairly hitched to it; but there is a little sober-eyed, tobacco-chewing man in the saddle, who holds him in with one finger, and can take away his breath in a moment, should he grow restive and vicious. I am always deeply interested in this man, for, begrimed as he may be with coal diluted in oil and steam, I regard him as the genius of the whole machinery, —as the physical mind of that huge steam horse.”

## SECTION OF GRAND CRESCENT AND BOULEVARDS.

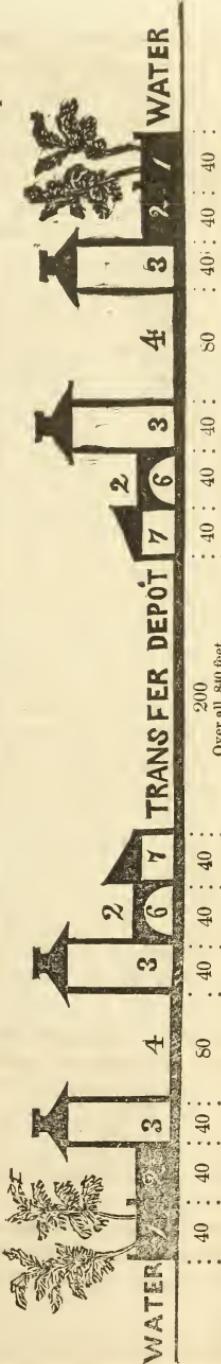
11, Sunk Area. — 10, Foot Pavements. — 40, Carriage-ways. — 20, Rail-road.



20 feet, Basement. — 15, first, and second Floor. — 11, third, and fourth Floor. — 10, Roof.

## SECTION OF CIRCUS-ISLAND.

1, Grass and Trees. — 2, Streets. — 3, Houses. — 4, Back Courts. — 5, Cellars, under Streets. — 7, Ware-houses of the Depot.



below the streets. The diameter of the depot is put at 200 feet, but may be less or more; as, may every part of the island, when all is minutely considered. The section gives a very poor idea, indeed, of the grandeur of Circus Island. The city of Venice exhibits nothing to compare to it or the Boulevards; though, there, opportunities were afforded for fine displays of the kind.

ET CETERA,—ET CETERA.

During my stay in Boston, I have seldom walked abroad, but some object for improvement has caught my eye. I shall direct attention to two, worthy of notice.

When it was proposed to place a statue of General Washington on the site of the Old State House, I began to look at that building; and, the more it was looked at, the more it seemed worthy of preservation. In fact, it is a goodly specimen of the olden time, and its tower is elegant. I would by no means have it removed, but shall suggest some beneficial alterations. I would cut off 20 or 30 feet,—two or three windows, from the east end; and add a story to the height of wall, which the long and steep roof admits of; thereby getting quit of the storm windows, and long gawky chimney stacks. Shortening the building would add to the respectability of State street, and afford more room for an audience listening to orators mounted on the *rostrum*.\* It would yield a full sweep for carriages coming out of, or entering Devonshire street; and, from Washington street, it would widen the view, down State street. The building, itself, would look better. Having, then, the form of a cross, it would resemble a church; and the tower would be more conspicuous from the east, while the centre of its east end would more nearly approximate to that of State street. Although it stands in the middle of that street, I do not think it an obstruction: on the contrary, it serves to divide the currents flowing into it from Washington street and Court street; and prevents collision, which might otherwise happen from the opposing streams.

Citizens of Boston can never be too grateful for the good done by President Quincy moral and physical, while he was Mayor,—his scouring the streets of indecency, and erecting the market called after him. Quincy Market would be respectable any where; and, as yet, is perhaps, sufficiently capacious. By-and-bye, however, it may be enlarged to advantage; and, fortunately, there is room for this. It is narrower by some 27 feet than Faneuil Hall; and, in the fullness of time, it may be made equally wide, and equally high. Then, the architecture of both may be improved, and made to correspond. Also, there may be a gallery over the market suiting the utmost wants of exhibitions such as that now about to be,—the exhibition of mechanic excellence, (the Mechanic Fair,)—for mighty civic feasts, &c.—All this, I think, should be kept in view.

\* Since the above was printed, I have seen a picture of this building as it was originally, with an elegant door and steps, which I would have replaced, instead of what is called the *rostrum*;—with a spacious passage from end to end, and stalls on each side for petty vendors, rest and refreshments.

## EXTENT OF IMPROVEMENTS.

The mass of the New Town, alluded to, would lay within a line described with a radius of two miles and a half—the State House being a centre—from Tremont road to Charlestown. A radius of one mile would nearly inclose all within the Boulevards; and, supposing it to be four miles from Tremont road to Charlestown, along the middle of the intervening space,—then, there would be nearly six square miles of surface for building on; and, I have calculated, “*that there are, at least, 2,000 acres of surface now wholly worthless, from the overflow of water.*” This, altogether, is rough guessing, but near enough for present purposes.

I would recommend a special Act of the legislature, regarding this extent: another, regarding all within a complete circle described with the above radius; and, a third Act, regarding what would be included within a radius of six miles. The first-mentioned circle would take in South and East Boston, the villages of Roxbury, Charlestown, and Chelsea:—the second, Dorchester, and part of Quincy, Jamaica Plains, Brookline, Brighton, Watertown, Medford, and Malden; with all the islands of the harbor not outside of the Narrows and Broad Sound.

Two hundred years ago, Westminster was distinct from London; and, I can remember when Islington and Hakney, Camberwell and Kensington, with many other villages in the neighborhood, were parted by extensive pastures and garden grounds. Now, all are conglomerated into one vast mass of building, except the public parks and squares. By-and-bye, these being considered insufficient for recreation and health, Regent park was laid out; and, more recently, Government has appropriated public money to provide pleasure-grounds for other cities. It will, I am sure, be wise, should you, by legislation, look to the approaching wants of Boston, in the same way; and, by doing so, in time, within the circles spoken of, you may secure, cheaply and in the best manner, what will be most advantageous to all concerned,—individuals, and the public.

Most fortunately, the Common was at an early day devoted to the health and recreation of citizens of Boston; and, mercifully was the Botanic Garden withheld from building on, as once contemplated. In addition to these, the Elysian Fields and Boulevards will not be too much for the New Town; besides a due assortment of squares, crescents, and circuses.

What a misery is it, that, within the peninsula, there is not space left for yard-room to each house, where children may divert themselves, safely, in the open air; and, those of mature years cultivate flowers, to soften their hearts and better their affections. Planning out the New town, this should be seen to. Nay, I would enact that so much room should be secured, forever, against the inroad of rapacity, and dedicated to such sacred purposes. Now that rail-roads diminish distance, such luxury can be afforded without the smallest inconvenience; for, this makes it unnecessary to crowd buildings together within the least space.

It is to be regretted, that there was no plan for the extension of Boston at an early day; but, less excusable was it, when larger masses of building were about being added to the city, that the Authorities did not interpose, and look out for the health and comfort of posterity. Look to Marion street, only 24 feet wide; and many others in the same neighborhood still narrower; with miserable holes for entrance, by stairs, into the basements; which are sinks of disease and infection,—being without sufficient light or air. Look to Harrison Avenue, an approach to the city, and a mile long, only 60 feet wide. No street, even the shortest, should be less than 30 feet wide; if a quarter of a mile long, 50 feet; if half a mile, 70; and, if a mile, not less than 90 feet.—Harrison Avenue is evidently too narrow, as well for appearance, as the stream of traffic which flows through it. It ought to have been 80 feet, at least.

Could the British Government have anticipated the mighty growth of London, and had facilities of our day, what an amount of comfort, convenience, and beauty might have been secured by planning rightly!—how admirably might the remote parts of that mass of building been connected! Now, then, is the time for action, here:—now, not only may errors be, in part, corrected; but, the very best measures may be adopted for the growth of this city, which has every chance to go beyond London, in magnitude, before two hundred years are at an end:—Yes, London never can have such an amount of commerce as Boston will have within that period. Compare the back country of Boston with that of London,—a thousand, with a hundred miles! Think that London became great before Liverpool began to compete with her in trade; and, that she is kept growing by a multitude of accidental and factitious circumstances which time may change and dissipate, while Boston only waits for certainties,—the constant and sure increase of American population,—American enterprise, and American stability,—the freedom of all mankind, and the last—the glorious triumph of humanity over installed despotisms, ignorance, and vice.

It is not so much the export of raw produce which increases the wealth and population of a city, as the combined advantages of general commerce. New York and New Orleans may export more flour and pork, cotton and sugar, &c. than Boston; but, will fall short of her, in many other respects. Venice, and some other cities, became great and powerful, although they had little raw produce to dispose of:—nay, while they imported their own food; but they trafficked all round the world, and drew profit from exchanging the products of distant nations. Boston, in all this, has already gone ahead; and to the most profitable employment of capital on the ocean, she is making mighty investments of stock in manufactures,—more lucrative than agriculture. Her manufactured articles will ever find a profitable market in the south, and furnish abundant luxuries; while a small proportion will readily supply her with bread from the west. Her position, on the globe and on the sea-board: her capital, gradually increasing: her indefatigable industry: her knowledge, her habits, and her enterprise,—all conspire to her great-

ness. Boston, indeed, wants but time; and, your forethought should prepare for it.

William Penn was the first to exercise forethought on this continent, in city building; and, with so good an example as Philadelphia, it is strange that New York was so long behind; but, yet stranger by far is neglect here. New York did well, so far, to lay out avenues and streets; but, better still may be done there. Beyond where buildings have reached, there is a tract on which architecture and rural beauty may be combined to the greatest advantage. Along Härlem heights, grandeur unprecedented may be exhibited; and, even so far as Kingston bridge, nature invites the citizens of New York to improve the beauties of their island: so, within the space inclosed by the outer circle round Boston, (call it BOSTON BOUNDS,) fine improvements may be made, at little cost, merely by connecting, and exhibiting to the greatest advantage, those rare and beautiful features which nature has here thrown together for the hand of man to work upon.

The high grounds near Roxbury, Chelsea, &c.—Mount Auburn, Fresh Pond, Spy Pond, &c.—the streams, the islands, and the promontories;—all may be made to harmonize, in one grand panorama,—to display striking and enchanting scenes, such as imagination, once awakened, may conceive better than it is possible to describe.

How easily could PATHS, and RIDES, and DRIVES, be conducted round about, and among all these fascinating objects!—How agreeable would it be to have public carriages, hourly, to carry us to each place, in turn,—allowing sufficient time for strangers to be satisfied:—to have a steamboat, in connection, running from Squantum Point: touching at certain promontories, islands, &c.; and, landing at Winthrop head!—All this, needs but legislation; for, if set about, it would pay, and yield unspeakable gratification.

#### WAYS AND MEANS.

I have calculated, that, “*there are 2,000 acres wholly worthless, which, by the proposed improvements, would be realized to immense value;*”—and have said, that, “*so far from expense being incurred, profit would instantly ensue.*”—Let me now prove it.

Had I found favor in the sight of the city authorities last year, as a *farmer*; and, had they taken my offers for embellishment of the Common, my credit by this time might have been established so far, that, perhaps, you, gentlemen, would have listened to me, in saying that, even as a *farmer*, I could pay rent for the 2,000 acres, on a lease of 20 years; and, during that period, embank, drain, and make solid dry land of all these acres, free of cost to the public. As it is, and to stimulate some other person better known here, and thence more worthy of confidence, I shall frankly tell how I would go to work. I would contract with my friend — —, of Bangor, for a supply of coarse lumber, with which I would pile and slab up two lines, 20 feet apart, along the whole front of the Boulevards; and,

in same way, confine Charles River, upwards, within proper bounds; —filling up the space between the piling, with stones and gravel. I would, then, drive stakes, in lines retreating from the Boulevards, outward, and a furlong apart, each from each; which stakes I would warp with brushwood; and, then, leave the greater part of the surface to do its own business, by arresting mud and floating substances, for the formation of land. Perhaps, I might agree with mill-owners and others, up stream so far as Waltham, to allow me to cut channels from Charles River into my inclosures, that, during freshets, mud, &c., might be carried thither to settle down; and, with leave, I might put sluices on the river, also in aid of my works, &c. &c. &c.

Whoever will take the trouble to walk along the Mill-Dam and various bridges downwards, at ebb tide, will see that there is little deep water outside the line of the Boulevards;—so that, there would be no difficulty in piling, or staking: and whoever has seen operations, elsewhere, for making land, in the way described, will acknowledge that it is wonderfully efficient and expeditious. It would not leave a very great deal to do with travelled earth; nor would the moving of this, by temporary rail-roads, be ruinous. Mark then, how speedily acres for cultivation might thus be secured; and, how productive these might be made from city manure, street sweepings, &c.

I have said, that "*south of the Mill-Dam may be set about and completed; next, that between the Mill-Dam, Cambridge, East Cambridge,*" &c. I would, in fact, begin to sell off, for building, at Providence Depot; and, proceed round the Boulevards, just as there was demand for building lots. Any one may amuse himself, with calculating what the 2,000 acres would bring at the rate of a dollar and half a foot; which is, I understand, the selling price of building lots on the New street fronting the Botanic Garden at the present time.

If this brief sketch is not all that may be required for conviction, I shall willingly explain further, when you appoint a committee to investigate and report on the whole matter.

Gentlemen:—Volumes might be written on the improvement of Boston. I have attempted only to give a lead to inquiry. The subject is mighty, and cannot be too gravely considered. It regards the comfort of generations in all coming time. No country ever started with such advantages as the United States: no city ever had such prospects as this at the present moment. It seems to me, that the watery waste which surrounds Boston has been designed, first, that the inhabitants should be penned up, and thence feel discomfort, till now that the utmost advantage may be made of it:—that on this waste they may form a city, surpassing all others, either in ancient or modern times.

I have now only to commend you to God, and to pray that He may direct you in all things. Very sincerely, yours,

ROB. F. GOURLAY.

Marlboro' Hotel, September 14, 1844.

## THE SCIENCE OF CITY BUILDING

EXTRACT, from the *Autobiography of John Trumbull* :—

" I arrived in London in January 1784, went immediately to Mr. West, and was received most cordially.

" My father had written a letter to Mr. Edmund Burke, expressive of his gratitude for the kindness shown to his son when in prison, and commending me to his future protection. This letter I early presented, and was most kindly received. ' Your father speaks of painting as being the great object of your pursuit: do you not intend to study architecture also? ' asked Mr. Burke. I replied, that ' I thought I knew enough already for my purpose in backgrounds, &c.' ' I do not mean that, Mr. Trumbull. You are aware, that architecture is the eldest sister, that painting and sculpture are the youngest, and subservient to her: you must also be aware, that you belong to a young nation, which will soon want public buildings: these must be erected before the decorations of painting and sculpture will be required. I would therefore strongly advise you to study architecture thoroughly and scientifically, in order to qualify yourself to superintend the erection of these national buildings. Decorate them, also, if you please.'

" This was wise and kind advice, and I had afterwards sufficient evidence of my own want of wisdom in neglecting to follow it: a few of the hours of evenings, which, with all my fancied industry, were trifled away, would have sufficed for the acquisition of thorough architectural knowledge."

Mr. Trumbull's biography was published 1841, and he died last year. This year, I believe, for the first time, attention has been called to defects in the architecture of the United States, by a native,—a writer in the *North American Review*. It is not important to notice the *defects* of this writer; but it is well that the subject has been brought up to public notice.

In the year 1834, the Custom-House in New York was about being built, and an elevation of it was published in newspapers. This drew the attention of Mr. William Ross, a scientific and practical architect, just then arrived from England. He informed those who had charge of the work, that the dome, which appeared in the elevation, was not correct: in fact, the person who had furnished the plan and the elevation had not been master of his profession. Mr. Ross was employed to correct details, and, although a dome appears inside of the building, the walls have been carried up to hide it from view, outside: indeed, the whole roof is now nearly flat,—being covered over with marble slabs.

Last year, I endeavored to correct a monstrous error at Bunker-Hill Monument, but failed.—Having been on the top of it, April 21, 1843, I wrote the following lines, and gave them to the door-keeper:

The LONDON "*bully lifts his head and lies;*  
But THIS—more truthful, all the world defies.

On coming away, I observed some laborers digging into the bank, on the south side of the hill; and, going to them, inquired of a young man who was superintending the work, what was the object. He told me it was a foundation for a stair to approach the monument. By placing myself opposite the centre of the monument, I saw that the digging was some 10 or 12 feet too far west, and informed the young man of the error. He said, they took the middle of the bank for the proper place. I replied, that people would look not to the middle of the bank, but the middle of the monument; and, that he should apprise his employer of this, as a few dollars would yet put all right. Coming into the city, I wrote a letter to the editor of Boston Post, and, the more to attract notice, headed the letter with the above couplet; but, the editor returned my letter, and my trouble went, then, for nothing.

Two months afterwards, I walked to Charlestown, and found a handsome stair where the people had been digging, with three others;—one, on the north side of the hill; one, on the east, and another, on the west. I have since measured the departures from the right positions, and they are as follow:—The stair on the south side,—that first spoken of,—11 feet wrong: that on the north side, 15 feet: that on the west, 16; and, that on the east, 22.

Meeting a person on the top of the hill, I spoke of the errors, and he informed me of a curious result. He said, that one day while walking there, he observed a gentleman step out of a carriage and look towards the monument from the bottom of the west stair. After eyeing it a while, this person, who was a Scotsman, observed, that the monument leaned to one side: that, said my informant, cannot be, for it was erected on a deep foundation and very carefully built. The Scotsman bade him look from where he was, and bring the top line of the stair to bear upon the bedding of one of the layers of stone in the monument, which would convince him; and, in appearance, it was so. They then went to the opposite side of the hill; looked up the stair, and found that the monument seemed to lean the other way. My informant now had the advantage,—asserting, that the monument could not lean two different ways. In fact, the error in building the stairs, had distorted every thing through the media of perspective.

I have never inquired who was the planner of these stairs; and, certainly, wish not to injure his reputation. Probably, he is a civil engineer, not an architect, and, had a plan of the square which encloses Breed's Hill to work by, into which streets are to run from the east, north, and west. On the north, the street is formed by some wooden buildings, and looking up that street towards the monument, the planner might judge it best to place the stair opposite the middle of the street: and, on his paper plan, all might look well enough; but the grand object, to be approached, was the monument. The stairs should have been placed so as to tally with it, and ought still

to be. The street on the north could yet be easily corrected, if required: those on the east, and west, formed to tally with the corrected stairs. It will be expensive to alter the stairs and the railings all round the hill; but, better do so than have posterity, till the end of time, reflecting on the bungling of this age.

Bunglings of this sort are not confined to America: even in Edinburgh, which displays so much good design and fine buildings, monstrous blunders have been committed. Twenty years ago, a new approach to the old town was suggested. As soon as it appeared that this would be executed, a parcel of individuals banded together for speculation in building lots, — obtained control, and spoilt all. Instead of employing a civil engineer to plan out the ground, they had an architect who favored their views; and he, ignorant of such matters, made sad work of it. By and bye, this became apparent; and a civil engineer was substituted just at the moment when the business required an architect. About the same time, a costly church was erected in the new town, which, for want of due consideration, was placed obliquely towards a street leading to it; and, there it stands grinning at all beholders, as does Bunker Hill monument, seen from the bungled stairs.

Did a society exist for promoting the science of city-building, nothing of this sort would occur. A watchful eye would be ever over all that concerned the public; and by and bye, every thing would be done well: indeed, public taste would be established, with a constant advancement in elegance and refinement.

The Boston Horticultural Society is a praiseworthy institution of recent origin, and now becoming respectable. A love of fine flowers and fruits betters all the affections, and prepares man for communion with God. The science of city-building includes this; for gardening and architecture are sisters. Its study would not only promote refinement in the present day; but tend to the comfort and happiness of all succeeding generations.

The disposition to build cities is inherent in man, and necessary to his condition on earth. No sooner did men begin to multiply, both before and after the flood, than they set about city-building. God found no fault with this, and checked them only when they attempted a vain and presumptuous thing — “a tower whose top may reach unto heaven.”

It does not appear, either from history or the remains of ancient cities, that any one of these was planned to afford the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Cain laid out the first, before the flood; Nimrod the first, after it; and naturally, such men thought most of themselves. The mighty ruins of Thebes record little else than the triumphs of conquest; and visitors at Athens and Rome, find nothing worthy of notice save the results of arbitrary power and superstition. One thing should not be overlooked when surveying the works of by-gone days; — the fact, that when there was sufficient stimulus, there was sufficient talent in man to produce delightful objects. The superstition of the Greeks called forth their architecture, which is admitted at the present time; that of the

church of Rome, the pointed architecture,—still more befitting the house of God, — more solemn — more sublime. The middle ages needed strength, and, the castellated style, in many instances, extorts admiration: now, we want comfort and elegance, from the palace down to the cottage,—order and arrangement, in streets, — variety and beauty, in squares, and crescents: now, the many should plan out for the many, and the many should stimulate the many to do the best for all.

Is it not for the people of America, on their virgin soil and with their free and independent institutions, to see to this?—and, where, in America, is such fitness,—such ability for beginning as in New England? — where such a subject for improvement, as the city of Boston?

But, what am I told, in Boston? — how have I been continually assailed, here, while offering plans for the improvement of the city? “O!” it is said, “nobody cares for such matters here: no two people, here, will agree about improving the streets: all, here, are intent on securing the almighty-dollar: show them how to get that; and, then, you will have plenty to approve and assist.” But, this is not the whole truth: the people of Boston are not so very selfish, or tardy to move. Has not the Common been fenced in at great expense? has not the frog pond been scoured out, and made really a pretty sheet of water?—have not fine trees been trained up, and comfortable walks been formed, all within the Common?—has not Mount Auburn been created?—are not buildings every day becoming more and more elegant?—are not pressed brick taking the place of clapboards?—and is not the beautiful granite substituted for brick? But, most hopeful of all, is the attention paid to schools,—training up the rising generation to orderly habits, and the best principles. Look to the school-houses so handsome—so well planned—so costly: “O! but where is the money to come from, for your mighty projects,—your Boulevards — your Circus Island — and, your sub-urban railroads? We might all subscribe a little for a statue of General Washington; but how are you to get quit of Dock-square, and the valuable property all round?—it is impossible, and no one will listen to you, a moment.” But, I say, take your time for all this opposition, obstruction, and contempt. I have been very happy, here, planning for you these last eighteen months, and shall remain happy in the assurance that I have meant all for good. Very probably, I shall be gone before there is any serious move, on the part of the citizens of Boston, in this business,—perhaps dead: — but, certain I am, the time approaches when a move must be made, and a great one too. Some one, besides me, will see that the watery waste — the 2,000 acres of land, now generating miasma and disease, close to Boston, may be made available, — may become the finest site in the world for a new town;—will see, that,—placing the whole of it, and much more, under proper management, means may be obtained not only for the growth of the new town, but for executing every desirable improvement within the peninsula. Certainly, were a Society instituted all would be speedily seen to, and acted on. R. F. G.

# GENERAL PLAN FOR ENLARGING & IMPROVING THE CITY OF BOSTON.

New Town  
of  
Boston

to be laid out,

as taste, &

convenience,

may

dictate

Charles River

Distributing Rail Road

Charles

River

Howell Railroad  
Canal Bridge

New Town  
Etc.

Boulevards & Rail Road  
continued to East Boston required

Charlestown Bridge  
Warren Bridge

Harbour

Wharves

Ferry









